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IRIS SERIES

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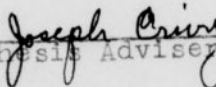
Cynthia Cox Moore

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A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro
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Approved by

5

Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee
of the Faculty of the Graduate School of North Carolina at
Greensboro.

Thesis Adviser

Joseph Crum

Oral Examination
Committee Members

Gilbert L. Campbell

Andrew Pearson

Warren Barker

Joseph Crum

May 3, 1972
Date of Examination

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CATALOGUE OF EXHIBIT

Left Panel

L to R at top

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---------|
| 1 | Lilac Iris with Buds | 32 X 36 |
| 2 | Yellow Iris in Field | 28 X 28 |
| 3 | Multi-Pink (watercolor) | 11 X 18 |

Bottom

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--------|
| 4 | Study for Lilac Iris with Buds | 8 X 11 |
| 5 | Study for Quartet with Five | 8 X 11 |

Center Wall

- | | | |
|----|---------------|---------|
| 6 | Height of May | 32 X 40 |
| 7 | The White One | 32 X 40 |
| 8 | Apricot Group | 32 X 40 |
| 9 | White Trio | 32 X 40 |
| 10 | Double Orange | 32 X 40 |

Right Panel

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|---------|
| 11 | Quartet with Five | 80 X 86 |
|----|-------------------|---------|

Seperate Panel

To East

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---------|
| 12 | Iris and Peonies (watercolor) | 28 X 36 |
|----|-------------------------------|---------|

To West - L to R

- | | | |
|----|--|--------|
| 13 | Swamp Iris (pencil) | 8 X 10 |
| 14 | Study for Golden Ladder (colored pencil) | 5 X 7 |
| 15 | Study for White Iris (colored pencil) | 5 X 7 |

IRIS SERIES

This series of iris paintings has developed from a very real admiration for a plant that has been a favorite of different civilizations for thousands of years. In her volume "The Iris Book" Molly Price has as frontispiece a fresco from the Palace of Knossos on Crete showing a plumed priest¹ king standing in a mass of waist-high iris. This early portrayal dates back 4,000 years. The structure of the flower itself is its most striking feature, a quality contemporary breeders emphasize in the development of black and white forms. The color range apparently is unlimited which invites free manipulation of color. Since there are 200 members of iris species recognized there is ample opportunity to experiment with forms, a challenge to grower and artist alike.

The iris has survived a harsh environment in mountains, swamps and dry rocky places. This quality of endurance in solitude is an aspect I have pursued which may show up more strongly in that work which suggests landscape elements in the background. Plantings are frequently observed on the

¹ Price, Molly, The Iris Book, D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc. (Princeton, N.J. 1966)

sites of abandoned homesteads.

There is no attempt to portray deep space. The lifelong influence of oriental art and plants has lead to a greater interest in overlapping and edges always with an awareness of the two dimensional surface. There is also a concern for the effect of thinly applied colors which is probably a different interest from other contemporary painters of floral themes.

Georgia O'Keefe's "Black Iris" of fifty years ago is a cool and austere presentation of a vista seen here as more open.² A further concern has been with the rhythms of tissue striations that exhibit the same tensions found in other living forms and which are discussed at length in Matila Ghyka's book "The Geometry of Art and Life."³ These seem to be re-discovered by aestheticians at regular intervals.

Of necessity the method of working has been simple. In season the flowers are plentiful but a life cycle may complete itself in one sitting. Most of the watercolors

² Goodrich, Lloyd, Georgia O'Keefe, Whitney Museum of American Art, Praeger Publishers (New York 1970)

³ Ghyka, Matila, The Geometry of Art and Life, Sheed and Ward (New York 1968)

are done from direct observation. The oils evolved from careful drawing.

There is no particular allegiance to any scale. The experience of working on a large scale has been exhilarating and in keeping with current conditions that seem to overwhelm us with the constant bombardment of visual information. It is a device to get and hold attention.

The group of four large oil paintings set up a different series of problems not encountered in the other work. Each unit has been devised to stand alone or as groups of two hung vertically or horizontally. Hung as a group of four an attempt has been made to design the lavender and white flower as a center of interest with the feeling that to do otherwise would produce exhaustion in the viewer. The three large flowers occupy roughly the same plane but the yellow and pink have been subdued to let the blue come forward slightly to produce a larger contrast to the smaller lavender and white flowers. When hung separately these conditions need not hold.

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A collection of two by two slides of this series has been placed in the Walter Clinton Jackson Library at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, N.C.